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ABSTRACT

Over 11,000 parents of pre-high-school-age children from the Archdiocese of Washington (D.C.) rated the importance of eight factors which influenced their decisions to send their children to Catholic schools. The sample included about 2,000 non-Catholic parents with children in Catholic schools and about 1,700 Catholic parents with children not in Catholic schools. Academic program, a religious factor, and discipline in that order were the three most important factors for parents who selected Catholic schools. The importance of these factors varied by the religion, race, and family income of the respondents. A higher percentage of non-Catholics than Catholics selected academic program as most important. Religious factors were selected as most important more by white Catholics than by black Catholics. Parents with higher incomes were more likely to select academic program and less likely to select a religious factor as most important. The majority of parents who did not send their children to Catholic schools listed finances as the most important reason while a significant number selected academic program as most important. In general in making the choice whether to send a child to a Catholic school, parents with higher incomes, especially black parents, were more likely to choose academic program as the most important reason. (Author)

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Parental Choice of Catholic Schools as a Function
of Religion, Race, and Family Income

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Running Head: Parental Choice

Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
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Abstract

Over 11,000 parents of pre-high-school-age children from the Archdiocese of Washington (D.C.) rated the importance of eight factors which influenced their decisions to send their children to Catholic schools. The sample included about 2,000 non-Catholic parents with children in Catholic schools and about 1,700 Catholic parents with children not in Catholic schools. Academic program, a religious factor, and discipline in that order were the three most important factors for parents who selected Catholic schools. The importance of these factors varied by the religion, race, and family income of the respondents. A higher percentage of non-Catholics than Catholics selected academic program as most important. Religious factors were selected as most important more by white Catholics than by black Catholics. Parents with higher incomes were more likely to select academic program and less likely to select a religious factor as most important. The majority of parents who did not send their children to Catholic schools listed finances as the most important reason while a significant number selected academic program as most important. In general in making the choice whether to send a child to a Catholic school, parents with higher incomes, especially black parents, were more likely to choose academic program as the most important reason.

Parental Choice of Catholic Schools as a Function
of Religion, Race, and Family Income

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of the religion, race, and family income of parents on their selection of factors which influenced their decisions whether to send their children to a Catholic school.

Currently there is considerable interest in the issue of parent choice of the type of school for their children. At least four factors contribute to this interest. First, evidence exists that private schools, especially Catholic schools, seem to be more effective than public schools in achieving many of the desired goals of schooling, and particularly so for minority students (Bryk & Holland, 1984; Cibulka, O'Brien, & Zewe, 1982; Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, 1982; Greeley, 1982). Second, confidence in the public schools has waned (Gallup, 1981), in part as a result of reports, such as A Nation At Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which were critical of the schools. This occurs at a time when nonpublic schools, especially Catholic schools, are not at capacity (Donovan & Madaus, 1985). Third, more parents are exercising choice in their selection of schools as evidenced by the substantial increase in the number of nonpublic schools in this country in the last decade (Cooper, 1984). Fourth, the Reagan Administration's position on parental choice and its support for the instruments of choice, vouchers and tuition tax credits, have raised the national consciousness about the issue and have sparked much debate.

Most of the research on why parents choose nonpublic schools has involved Catholic schools. The three factors that consistently emerge as being important for parents in making their selection of Catholic schools are: religious instruction and environment, discipline, and quality of the school's academic program. Early studies (Greeley & Rossi, 1966; Kraushaar, 1972) found that religious factors were paramount in prompting parents to select Catholic schools. These studies were conducted at a time when many Catholic parents considered no alternatives to Catholic schools. Generally, Catholic students went to Catholic schools.

In the 1970s the number of Catholic schools and the number of students in each school declined largely due to demographic factors. However, also during this time, many parents no longer looked upon Catholic school attendance as mandatory for their children, but more as a choice to be made among alternatives. The reasons for making that choice still included religious considerations, but academic quality and discipline began to be the most important considerations for many parents.

Some studies continued to find that religious factors were most important in selecting a Catholic school. However, two of these studies were surveys of the general Catholic population, not necessarily parents of children currently in school, in the Archdiocese of Baltimore (Schaefer, 1983) and the diocese of Arlington (Moran, 1983). Erickson (1982) in his study on schools in British Columbia found that discipline was a close second choice to religious factors for parents and the quality of the academic program was third. Greeley,

McCready, and McCourt (1976) found that religious factors were viewed as most important by Catholics over 50, those with less education, and those from smaller towns. However, the majority of studies (Allen, personal communication to Patricia Bauch, September 10, 1984; Cibulka, O'Brien, & Zewe, 1982; Gratiot, 1980; Johnson, 1978) found that parents consistently chose academic quality of the school as the most important reason for their choice of a Catholic school.

To date few studies have examined the relationship between the socioeconomic status of parents and their reasons for choosing Catholic schools. Erickson (1982) found that the low-income parents in his study selected the academic quality of the school more frequently as their reason for choosing the school than did parents with higher incomes. On the other hand, other researchers have found that parents with higher incomes (Bryk & Holland, 1984) and with college educations (Greeley et al., 1976) tend to select the quality of the academic program as being the most important reason for selecting a Catholic school.

Academic factors and discipline have been instrumental in attracting large numbers of low-income, minority, non-Catholics to Catholic schools (Cibulka et al., 1982; Donovan & Martin, 1985; Vitullo-Martin & Vitullo-Martin, 1973). While parents who in the past would have sent their children to public schools now have more access to Catholic schools, research shows that only a small percentage are simply fleeing the public schools (Slaughter & Schneider, 1985), and that low-income parents are less likely to display anti-public school bias

than are high-income parents (Cibulka, 1984; Gratiot, 1980).

Method

The data for this study are from a parent survey given in October, 1983 as part of the Archdiocese of Washington (D.C.) High School Study. Surveys were distributed in each parochial elementary school and each parish of the Archdiocese. The respondents were parents of pre-high-school-age children who resided in the District of Columbia and five surrounding Maryland counties.

As part of the survey parents who sent their children to Catholic schools or who intended to send them rated on a three-step scale (Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important) the importance of eight factors in influencing their decision to choose Catholic schools. In addition, parents were asked to select from among the eight factors the one factor which was most important in influencing their choice. Parents who did not send their children to Catholic schools and who did not intend to do so rated a different set of eight factors. Three factors were common to both sets: Academic Program, Friends Attended, and Location of the School. The five other factors for parents of present and future Catholic school children were: Alternative to Public School, Discipline, Presence of Priests/Religious, Religious Education, and Discussion of Social/Moral Issues. The five other factors for parents not sending their children to Catholic schools were: Belief in Public School, Finances, Class Size, Inadequate Facilities, and Choice of Other Private Schools.

Over 14,000 parents completed a survey. Complete data for the issues examined in this paper were obtained from over 11,000 parents. Only data from black and white parents were used for the analyses in this paper. Almost 2,000 of these parents were not Catholic and over 3,000 were black. Just over 84% of the parents sent their children to Catholic schools or intended to do so.

Data were analyzed by the four race by religion groups. In addition, five levels of family income were included: Under \$10,000 (2.0%), \$10,000 to \$20,000 (12.8%), \$20,001 to \$30,000 (15.2%), \$30,001 to \$40,000 (29.6%), and Over \$40,000 (40.3%). For some analyses, the three religious factors (Presence of Priests/Religious, Religious Education, and Discussion of Social/Moral Issues) were grouped. Only data from Catholic parents were used for the analyses of factors why parents elect not to send their children to Catholic schools.

Results

Factors for Sending Child to Catholic School

The four leading factors chosen as most important by parents who selected Catholic schools for their children were: Academic Program (52.2%), a religious factor (25.4%), Discipline (11.9%), and Alternative to Public School (4.5%). Most of the choices of a religious factor were for Religious Education (17.4%). This relative order of factors occurs in both groups of Catholic parents (see Table 1); however, the percent of black Catholics (55.8%) selecting Academic Program is higher than the percent of white Catholics (47.0%) selecting this factor, while 31.2% of the white Catholics selected a religious factor compared to 22.0% of the black Catholics. In the two groups of non-Catholic parents,

over 66% of the parents selected Academic Program as most important with Discipline being the choice of the next largest number of parents (14.0%). A higher percent of black non-Catholics (9.4%) than white non-Catholics (6.9%) chose a religious factor as most important; however, white non-Catholics (9.4%) selected Alternative to Public School as most important to a greater degree than did black non-Catholics (4.9%).

Insert Table 1 About Here

When family income is considered, a striking positive relationship between income and the selection of Academic Program as most important occurs; that is, parents with higher family income are more likely to select Academic Program as the most important factor in influencing their decision about a Catholic school than are parents with lower income. Overall, 41.3% of parents with family income less than \$10,000 selected Academic Program compared to 55.2% of those with incomes greater than \$40,000. The relationship is particularly striking for black parents with corresponding percentages of 41.0% and 69.6%, respectively.

Insert Table 2 About Here

As Table 2 shows, the positive relationship between income groups and the selection of Academic Program as most important occurs most prominently in the two groups of Catholic parents, and especially for black Catholics. While the same general trend occurs between these variables for non-Catholic parents, a high percentage low-income non-Catholic parents, except for black non-Catholics who make less than \$10,000 per year, already select Academic Program as most important. On the other hand, as family income increases, an increasingly higher proportion of Catholic families selected Academic Program as the most important reason for sending their children to a Catholic school.

The opposite situation occurs when religious factors are selected as being the most important. Overall, there is a slight negative relationship between family income and choosing a religious factor as most important. However, for black parents the negative relationship between family income and the choice of a religious factor is much stronger (see Table 2). Just over one-third of the black Catholics with incomes under \$10,000 selected a religious factor as most important compared to less than one-fifth of those with incomes over \$40,000.

Selecting Alternative to Public School as the most important factor was positively related to family income for white parents, particularly non-Catholics, but negatively related to family income for black parents. This may mean, as has been suggested by some, that low-income blacks may be attracted to Catholic schools as a way of improving their children's situation, whereas many higher-income, non-Catholic, white parents who select Catholic schools really are fleeing from the public schools. Furthermore, the more affluent the

parent the easier it is to exercise the choice not to send the child to a public school.

Insert Table 3 About Here

Because of the ipsative nature of the ranking data, corroborative evidence was sought from the ratings of each factor separately. Overall, the following factors received the highest mean importance ratings: Academic Program (2.94), Discipline (2.84), Religious Education (2.68), Discussion of Social/Moral Issues (2.63), Presence of Priests/Religious (2.35), and Alternative to Public School (2.26). As Table 3 shows, both Catholic and non-Catholic parents had similar mean ratings for each of these factors, except for Religious Education and Presence of Priests/Religious where Catholic parents had substantially higher mean ratings. White Catholics and black Catholics differed little in their ratings of these factors. However, white non-Catholics and black non-Catholics did differ in their ratings of the importance of several factors. Black non-Catholics rated the importance of Religious Education and Presence of Priests/Religious higher than did white non-Catholics, while white non-Catholics rated Alternative to Public School higher in importance than did black non-Catholics.

Insert Table 4 About Here

The mean ratings given in Table 4 clearly show that parents at all income levels regard Academic Program as a very important factor in influencing their decision to send their children to a Catholic school. For most income by race by religion groups, Academic Program receives the highest mean rating of all other factors. The exceptions occur in the lowest income Catholic groups where Religious Education and, for white Catholics, Discipline receive higher mean ratings. As family income increases in the Catholic groups, the ratings of the importance of Academic Program increases. At the same time, except for the middle income group of black Catholics, the ratings of the importance of Religious Education decrease as family income increases.

All groups gave high ratings to the importance of Discipline as a factor. The mean ratings for Discipline are fairly consistent across the income groups with a tendency for families with lower incomes to rate Discipline slightly more important than do families with higher incomes.

The relative order of the ratings of the importance of Religious Education, Discussion of Social/Moral Issues, and Alternative to Public Schools varies by income across the four race by religion groups. At all income levels the order of the ratings of the Catholic groups is Religious Education, Discussion of Social/Moral Issues, and Alternative to Public Schools. This same order occurs for the lowest income groups of non-Catholics. However, as family income increases, white non-Catholics tend to rate the importance of Discussion of Social/Moral Issues and Alternative to Public Schools about the same and each of these higher than Religious Education. The pattern of ratings of black

non-Catholics is slightly different from that of white non-Catholics. As family income increases, Discussion of Social/Moral Issues receives a higher rating from black non-Catholics than do either Religious Education or Alternative to Public Schools. Overall, white non-Catholics at each income level rate Alternative to Public Schools higher in importance than do black non-Catholics.

In order to gain a better understanding of what factors really are important to parents in selecting a Catholic school, the mean rating score for these same factors were computed separately for groups of parents formed according to which factor each parent ranked as most important. These conditional mean ratings are given in Table 5. The numbers in the first column of Table 5 are the mean importance ratings for the five factors for those parents who ranked Academic Program as most important. The entries in the first row of Table 5 are the mean importance ratings of Academic Program for the five different groups of parents formed according to which factor the parents ranked as most important.

Insert Table 5 About Here

An inspection of Table 5 reveals apparently three distinct clusters of parents. The first cluster are those parents who selected Academic Program as the most important factor in influencing their decision to send their children to a Catholic School. These parents rated the religious factors (Religious Education and Discussion of Social/Moral Issues) lower than those parents who

selected either Discipline or one of the religious factors as being most important. Furthermore, there is considerable difference in the mean ratings of Academic Program (2.99) and the religious factors (2.53 each).

A second cluster contains those parents who selected a religious factor as being most important in their choice of a Catholic school. These parents gave higher ratings to both religious factors than did other groups, but they also rated Academic Program very high (2.91). Furthermore, the difference for these parents between the ratings for Academic Program and the religious factors is considerably less than the difference between these factors for parents who selected Academic Program as being the most important factor. Thus, it appears that parents who send their children to Catholic schools primarily for academic reasons are less concerned about religious factors than those parents who send their children to Catholic schools primarily for religious reasons are concerned about academic factors. Put another way, many parents who wish to send their children to Catholic schools for religious reasons will only do so if the academic program of the school meets with their approval. Other parents look only to the academic quality of the school and consider the religious education program of the school as an additional attraction.

The third, much smaller cluster of parents are those who selected Alternative to Public Schools as the most important factor in choosing a Catholic school. These parents give approximately equal importance to the factors of Academic Program, Discipline, and Alternative to Public Schools, but these parents rate Academic Program and the religious factors lower than all

parents from all other groups rate these factors.

Factors for Not Sending Child to Catholic Schools

The majority of Catholic parents who responded to the survey and who do not select Catholic schools for their children reportedly did so for financial reasons. Finances was selected as the most important factor by 40.1% of the white Catholics and 55.3% of the black Catholics (see Table 6). The second leading factor selected as most important by the parents was Academic Program. White Catholics selected this factor as most important more than did black Catholics (21.8% vs. 10.2%) and rated it higher in importance than did black Catholics (2.39 vs. 2.24). Of the remaining factors, Belief in Public Schools was the third leading factor selected as most important by both white Catholics (12.2%) and black Catholics (9.6%). However, School Facilities received the third highest set of mean importance ratings from both groups.

Insert Table 6 About Here

As expected the relationship between family income and choice of Finances as the most important factor for not selecting Catholic schools is very strong (see Table 7). For all family income groups, except the highest, Finances was selected more than any other factor as being the most important, and it received the highest mean rating score in these income groups.

White Catholics in the highest income group selected Academic Program as the most important factor for not selecting Catholic schools. These parents also rated Academic Program higher in importance than other factors. For these parents apparently quality of the academic program, location of the school, and adequacy of the facilities are more important than financial considerations.

Insert Table 7 About Here

The situation for higher income black Catholics is not quite the same. Even in the highest income group of black Catholics, Finances receives a higher mean importance score (2.41) than any other factor and is selected as being the most important factor by one-quarter of the parents in this group. While this percentage is much less than the percent of black Catholics in lower income groups who selected Finances, it still is higher than the percent who selected Academic Program (18.8%), the next leading factor.

Using conditional means, parents who selected Finances as most important for not sending their children to Catholic schools had mean ratings on Finances of 2.90 and on Academic Program of 2.14. Almost exactly the opposite occurred for parents who selected Academic Program as most important in not sending their children to Catholic schools. These parents had mean ratings of 2.13 for Finances and 2.90 for Academic Program. Thus there appears to be two predominant groups of parents with distinct reasons for not sending their children to Catholic schools. Those parents, and these are the majority, who do

not do so because of financial reasons, and those parents who do not do so for academic reasons.

Parents who choose not to send their children to Catholic schools because of academic reasons may do so because they base their judgments on the size of the classes and the adequacy of the resources that the school offers rather than on any direct evidence about the quality of the instructional program. The correlations between Academic Program and Class Size (.55), Academic Program and School Facilities (.55), and Class Size and School Facilities (.51) offer some indirect evidence of this.

Summary and Conclusions

The results of this study support the primacy of academic and financial considerations when parents decide whether to send their children to Catholic schools. Almost half of the Catholics and two-thirds of the non-Catholics who selected Catholic schools listed Academic Program as the most important factor in their choice. Almost two-thirds of the Catholic parents who chose not to send their children to Catholic schools listed either Finances or Academic Program as the most important factors in their choice. Parents who selected Academic Program as being the most important reason for selecting a Catholic school rated Discipline rather high in importance and rated the religious factors considerably lower in importance.

For many parents the most important factor in deciding upon Catholic schools is a religious one. This is more likely to be the case for a Catholic than for a non-Catholic, as expected, and for a white Catholic than for a black Catholic. While religious considerations are important for Catholic parents, for most Catholics religious reasons are not selected as being the most important factor as often as Academic Program is selected. Parents who selected a religious factor as being the most important, also rated Academic Program and Discipline very high in importance.

All parents who selected Catholic schools for their children rated Discipline high in importance, but few of these parents ranked Discipline as the most important factor in influencing their choice. Those parents who did rank Discipline as the most important factor, rated Academic Program high and the religious factors somewhat lower.

Only a very few parents indicated they chose Catholic schools as alternatives to public schools. Based on their ratings of the importance of the other factors, these parents appear to have made their choices for academic and disciplinary reasons rather than for religious reasons. For the most part these parents are white and non-Catholic; they are least likely to be black Catholics.

Family income has an impact on the reason for selecting a Catholic school. As family income increased, an increasingly higher percent of parents selected Academic Program as the most important factor in choosing Catholic schools. This increase was greater for black parents than for white parents. In

addition, the ratings of the importance of Academic Program increased slightly for Catholic parents as income increased, but these ratings were fairly constant for non-Catholic parents.

On the other hand, the percent of parents choosing a religious factor as most important in selecting a Catholic school generally decreased as family income increased. This decrease was greater for black parents than for white parents. Catholic parents in the lowest income group were equally likely to choose an academic factor or a religious factor. As income increased, Catholic parents were more likely to choose an academic factor than a religious factor with the difference between the percent choosing each type of factor increasing with increased income and becoming greatest for black Catholic parents.

After Academic Program and Discipline, black non-Catholics were more likely to select a religious factor as being the most important, while white non-Catholics were more likely to select Alternative to Public School. This difference was especially true for higher income parents.

Finally, choosing not to send their children to Catholic schools was predominantly a matter of finances for Catholic parents of all income groups. The one exception was for the white Catholic parents from the highest income group who selected Academic Program as being the most important reason more frequently than Finances. For most parents in this study it appeared rarely to be a combination of both financial and academic factors.

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Table 1

Percent of Parents Selecting Factor as Most Important
Reason for Sending Child to Catholic Schools

Factor	Catholic			Non-Catholic		
	White	Black	All	White	Black	All
Academic Program	47.0	55.8	48.8	66.6	66.1	66.3
Religious Factors ^a	31.2	22.0	29.4	6.9	9.4	8.6
Discipline	11.4	11.8	11.5	14.1	13.9	14.0
Alternative to Public School	4.2	3.6	4.1	9.4	4.9	6.4
Other Factors ^b	6.1	6.8	6.3	3.1	5.6	4.8

Number of Respondents	6508	1543	8051	601	1355	1956

^aReligious Factors are Religious Education, Presence of Priests and Religious, and Discussion of Social/Moral Issues.

^bOther Factors are Location of School, Friends Attend School, and Other.

Table 2

Percent of Parents From Each Religion by Race by Income Group Selecting
Factor as Most Important Reason for Sending Child to Catholic Schools

Family Income	N	Academic Program	Religious Factors	Discipline	Alternative Public School	Other Factor
<u>White Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	72	37.5	37.5	13.9	1.4	9.8
10000-20000	521	38.6	35.1	15.4	4.6	6.3
20001-30000	880	43.2	33.5	12.9	4.9	5.5
30001-40000	1891	47.3	29.7	10.9	4.0	7.0
Over 40000	2807	50.0	31.6	11.2	4.2	5.7
<u>Black Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	58	37.9	36.3	13.8	1.7	10.3
10000-20000	345	43.4	24.1	17.1	4.6	10.8
20001-30000	279	54.1	22.6	10.8	5.0	7.5
30001-40000	403	59.3	21.1	10.9	3.2	5.5
Over 40000	409	66.3	18.3	8.6	2.2	4.7
<u>White Non-Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	7	85.7	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0
10000-20000	67	61.2	10.4	14.9	6.0	4.5
20001-30000	73	65.8	6.8	17.8	8.2	1.4
30001-40000	161	67.1	7.5	13.0	8.1	4.3
Over 40000	257	68.1	5.4	13.2	10.5	2.7
<u>Black Non-Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	42	45.2	19.1	16.7	9.5	9.5
10000-20000	280	60.0	12.1	16.1	5.4	6.4
20001-30000	226	61.1	9.7	19.9	3.5	5.8
30001-40000	372	68.8	8.1	13.4	5.1	5.9
Over 40000	380	73.2	7.1	9.7	4.7	5.3

Table 3
Mean Importance Ratings of Factors for Sending
Child to Catholic School

Factor	Catholic			Non-Catholic		
	White	Black	All	White	Black	All
Academic Program	2.94	2.95	2.94	2.95	2.97	2.96
Discipline	2.82	2.86	2.83	2.86	2.87	2.87
Religious Education	2.76	2.76	2.76	2.12	2.41	2.31
Discussion of Social/ Moral Issues	2.65	2.61	2.64	2.50	2.55	2.53
Presence of Priests and Religious	2.41	2.50	2.43	1.86	2.09	2.01
Alternative to Public School	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.46	2.34	2.38
Location of School	2.20	2.19	2.20	2.15	2.16	2.16
Friends Attend School	1.50	1.32	1.46	1.42	1.23	1.29

Table 4

Mean Importance Ratings by Income Groups of Factors
for Sending Child to Catholic School

Family Income	N	Academic Program	Discipline	Religious Education	Social/ Moral	Alternative Public School
<u>White Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	72	2.84	2.91	2.92	2.68	2.30
10000-20000	521	2.91	2.87	2.84	2.65	2.34
20001-30000	880	2.92	2.85	2.81	2.64	2.30
30001-40000	1891	2.93	2.82	2.78	2.66	2.27
Over 40000	2807	2.96	2.80	2.72	2.65	2.19
<u>Black Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	58	2.84	2.79	2.86	2.49	2.12
10000-20000	345	2.91	2.88	2.76	2.59	2.29
20001-30000	279	2.96	2.86	2.81	2.61	2.31
30001-40000	403	2.96	2.88	2.76	2.65	2.19
Over 40000	409	2.97	2.85	2.72	2.61	2.23
<u>White Non-Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	7	3.00	3.00	2.86	2.75	2.57
10000-20000	67	2.93	2.83	2.39	2.48	2.48
20001-30000	73	2.96	2.90	2.26	2.68	2.55
30001-40000	161	2.95	2.85	2.20	2.49	2.39
Over 40000	257	2.96	2.85	1.94	2.45	2.46
<u>Black Non-Catholics</u>						
Under 10000	42	2.96	2.91	2.70	2.67	2.33
10000-20000	280	2.97	2.91	2.52	2.59	2.42
20001-30000	226	2.98	2.93	2.49	2.59	2.42
30001-40000	372	2.96	2.86	2.35	2.53	2.33
Over 40000	380	2.97	2.78	2.30	2.48	2.35

Table 5
Mean Ratings of Selected Factors Conditional
on Choice of Most Important Factor

Factor	Ranked Most Important				
	Academic Program	Discipline	Religious Education	Social/Moral Issues	Alternative Public Schools
Academic Program	2.99	2.89	2.91	2.91	2.86
Discipline	2.83	2.97	2.84	2.81	2.82
<u>Rating</u> Religious Education	2.53	2.66	2.98	2.80	2.45
Social/Moral Issues	2.53	2.58	2.74	2.97	2.46
Alternative Public School	2.24	2.34	2.16	2.22	2.85

Table 6

Catholic Parents' Rankings and Ratings of Factors
For Not Sending Child to Catholic Schools

Factor	Percent Ranking as Most Important		Mean Importance Rating	
	White	Black	White	Black
Finances	40.1	55.3	2.43	2.69
Academic Program	21.8	10.2	2.39	2.24
School Facilities	2.8	4.0	2.34	2.20
School Location	9.3	5.1	2.25	2.13
Class Size	2.2	2.0	2.08	2.11
Belief in Public Schools	12.2	9.6	1.88	1.87
Friends Attend Elsewhere	1.7	5.6	1.58	1.33
Other Private School	2.1	6.1	1.21	1.51
Other Factors	7.7	3.0		

Table 7

Catholic Parents' Rankings and Ratings of Selected Factors for
Not Sending Child to Catholic Schools by Income Groups

Income	N	<u>Percent Ranking as Most Important</u>			<u>Mean Importance Rating</u>		
		<u>Academic Program</u>	<u>Finances</u>	<u>Belief in Public School</u>	<u>Academic Program</u>	<u>Finances</u>	<u>Belief in Public School</u>
<u>White Catholics</u>							
Under 10000	24	12.5	79.2	0.0	2.48	3.00	1.64
10000-20000	158	8.2	70.9	5.1	2.28	2.78	1.73
20001-30000	217	11.5	57.6	7.8	2.16	2.70	1.75
30001-40000	454	19.6	44.7	11.2	2.34	2.58	1.90
Over 40000	637	30.6	21.5	16.6	2.51	2.11	1.95
<u>Black Catholics</u>							
Under 10000	28	10.7	53.6	17.9	2.10	2.74	2.03
10000-20000	64	9.4	71.9	7.8	2.26	2.77	1.92
20001-30000	34	8.8	61.8	2.9	2.20	2.71	1.85
30001-40000	39	5.1	48.7	7.7	2.30	2.67	1.80
Over 40000	32	18.8	25.0	15.6	2.31	2.41	1.71